

August 6<sup>h</sup>, 2003  
Rocky Mountain Best Western  
7:00 P.M.

## August Workshop #2 – Whitefish – DNRC Land Use Planning Process

The public was asked to write down on index cards and then discuss how they are currently using the lands, what concerns they have about land uses and what opportunities they might see. The results are as follows:

### **General Comments:**

All of the state lands in the study area are important to the people of Whitefish. Government involvement in private property development is a concern. Please don't "butcher" the area. Watch for the pattern of development overall.

As private lands that once provided recreation are lost, the provision of recreation on state lands becomes more important.

It is important to look at the lands as a whole, rather than in little bits.

The problem solvers in this process should look to the long term. Short term approaches are unacceptable. It is important to look at how we are funding our educational institutions in general. The schools in the state are underfunded and we must be creative and honest in our approach.

It is important to evaluate conflicts among different users.

Consider the value that recreation brings to the economy.

There is an overall tragedy in the loss of open space and recreational lands over time.

Keep the lands in their current use.

### **Current Land Uses:**

Haskill, Swift Creek and Beaver/Skyles Lakes areas are used for fishing, hunting, hiking and backpacking..

Current timber management is OK including a good timber project at Beaver Lake.

Spencer is used for walking and mountain biking. Stillwater is used for walking, mountain biking and hunting. Beaver Lake is used for mountain biking and walking.

People swim at Murray Lake.

Open spaces at Spencer and Beaver are very important.

Cabin holders at Beaver Lake observe moose, deer, bear, elk and loons.

Elkhorn at Spencer Lake provides opportunities for hiking and snowshoeing.

At Spencer, people hike, horseback ride and canoe on Spencer Lake.

People enjoy water sports at Spencer Lake.

People snowshoe, cross country ski, pick berries and mountain bike at Haskill.

Spencer, Beaver Lake and Haskill are all used by equestrians.

Beaver Lake cabin lessees use the area for horse back riding. Swift Creek is also used by equestrians.

People enjoy snowshoeing at Spencer Lake.

At Swift Creek, people horseback ride, hike and picnic.

**Concerns and Issues:**

It is important to preserve wildlife at Beaver Lake. Too many people will present a problem for the wildlife.

Water quality should be watched.

Fishing should be prohibited when loons are nesting.

Consider equestrian impacts on vegetation.

Examine conflicts between bikers and equestrians.

Over all, more people will create more problems.

At Spencer and Beaver Lakes traffic has impacts on both wildlife and water.

Loss of access via private lands, e.g., at Lion Mountain, limits access to state lands.

What is the status of the fishing access at Murray Lake?

At Beaver Lake there are conflicts among adjacent private landowners, cabin lessees, and members of the public.

State roads are not accessible from January through April because of snow.

Increased traffic and the associated pollution will negatively impact wildlife.

Recreation impacts on the land should be evaluated.

More development on state lands will result in greater competition (lower prices) on land sales.

It is important to remain good stewards of the lands. Some of the old timers don't think that the newcomers have been such good caretakers of the lands.

**Opportunities:**

More manpower would help regulate the recreation permit system. Currently there are “loon rangers” who monitor the birds and their nesting sites. It would be nice to provide greater management to assure that impacts are limited.

More information should be made available regarding recreation permit requirements and availability.

Note that there is an organization called “Friends of Beaver Lake” that should be contacted.

Pay stations should be added to collect fees.

Campground/cabin concessions might provide a way to increase income while keeping the lands open to the public. The concessionaire would manage the land for publicly accessed open space.

An open space bond should be considered.

Day use fees should be increased.

Stewardship can be achieved through good timber practices.

We should consider a way to place these lands in a permanent trust – in perpetuity.

The resort tax could be used to repay an open space bond.

Consider a bio-mass farm as an appropriate land use.